

no intention of trying to shut out any Senators who want to offer amendments. We had hoped some might come over tonight and offer them. We will certainly have all day tomorrow to deal with any and all amendments that Senators feel strongly about and on which they would like to have votes. But we really must move the process along, and that is the reason the majority leader wished to file a cloture motion tonight.

Mr. REID. Will the Senator yield?

Mr. MCCONNELL. Yes, I yield to my friend and colleague from Nevada.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, around here, we do not often see cloture motions signed by all four leaders. This cloture motion does have four leaders. We are serious about completing this bill at the earliest possible date. It would be a travesty if, having just completed a very significant piece of legislation led by Senators COLLINS and LIEBERMAN, we not do our share of the legislative reform that needs to be done.

The cloture motion was filed with reluctance. No one wanted to do it. But with the 8th of October staring us in the face literally, we have no choice but to do this. I hope people tomorrow will recognize there will be an effort made to offer these amendments. At 1 o'clock tomorrow, all first-degree amendments must be filed. That is the rule.

I hope people will come and discuss with us what problems they see with this amendment. We will be happy to work with them, but I think people should be ready to offer their amendments.

We have taken what we thought needed to be done from the 10 committees to give this committee, the homeland security committee, some strength. We hope people recognize that.

I understand how people are concerned about maintaining the jurisdiction of what they have, but this is a time when people have to give up a little bit for the good of the country and for the good of the Senate.

I totally support the cloture petition that was filed by the distinguished Senator from Kentucky on behalf of the two leaders because that is basically what happened.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I send a second cloture motion to the resolution to the desk as well.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on S. Res. 445, a resolution to eliminate certain restrictions on service of a Senator on the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence.

Bill Frist, Mitch McConnell, Harry Reid, John Cornyn, Craig Thomas, Jim

Inhofe, Mike Crapo, Conrad Burns, Norm Coleman, Tom Daschle, Lamar Alexander, James Talent, Wayne Allard, Gordon Smith, Larry Craig, Robert F. Bennett, Pete Domenici, Susan Collins.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, as my good friend from Nevada has indicated, we hope to process all of the amendments that Members of the Senate feel strongly about. We will be open for business on this resolution all day tomorrow, and there should be ample time to deal with all of the amendments that our colleagues feel strongly about and wish to offer.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nevada.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I think everyone within the sound of our voices should understand the majority leader and minority leader were on the Senate floor and they both said we are going to stay here until we finish this, the Homeland Security conference report and the FSC tax bill. Those matters are going to be finished. If we can finish on Friday, we will be out of here. If we are finished on Saturday, we will be out of here. But the two leaders have said we are going to work to finish this legislation.

We are dealing with Senators who know all the rules just as we do, but I will indicate that this is a little different time. We are trying to bring Congress to a close, at least this part of it. Everyone should understand the determination of the two leaders to move this matter forward and the other things that are going to come before the Senate.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, the assistant Democratic leader has clearly outlined what the goal of the two leaders, both Republican and Democrat, are for the balance of this session before we adjourn for the election. We are hoping to complete all of those items no later than Friday.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that there be a period for morning business with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

HEALTH CARE

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, I appreciate those comments. I actually would not be here asking to do this if it were not for the earlier comments of the Senator from Pennsylvania, speak-

ing as in morning business, as it relates to Senator KERRY's health care plan. I felt in fairness, as someone who works extensively on health care, that it was important to come down and speak to the errors that were presented earlier as my colleague spoke on the other side of the aisle.

First, it is important to know that it does not matter who we talk to today, it does not matter who comes into my office or what conversation I have with people throughout the great State of Michigan, the issue of health care always comes up.

Right now the big three automakers, struggling to compete internationally with their business competitors around the world, are talking about the need to address the high cost of health care. They have indicated to me on more than one occasion that this needs to be one of our top priorities of the Congress and the President of the United States: to tackle the explosion in health care costs.

We also know that half of those costs is the explosion in prescription drug prices, and that specifically needs to be addressed. We have proposals we have been consistently bringing to this body and bringing to the President of the United States that will bring prices down. So when we talk to our manufacturers in Michigan, this is a huge issue. If I talk to the workers who work for our manufacturers, it is a huge issue for them. They are being asked to pay more copays, more premiums, to take pay cuts, in some cases layoffs, as a result of the high cost of health care and the fact that there has been no action to address this while premiums and costs continue to go up faster and faster.

I could talk to a group of seniors in Michigan and certainly talk about medicine and the fact that the bill that passed this last year for Medicare is more about helping the prescription drug industry than it is about helping our seniors in this country. They know what we need to be doing. They want to see the pharmacists be able to do business with pharmacists in Canada, be able to bring prices down, cut them in half or, in some cases, 70 percent.

Seniors understand we have a crisis as it relates to the cost of medicine and health care in this country, and they certainly know when we look at the fact that this administration has announced the largest Medicare premium increase—17½ percent—in the history of the program since 1965 when it was instituted even though it is estimated that Social Security will go up possibly only as much as 3 percent. I have a bill that has been introduced with colleagues of mine to cap that Medicare increase at the cost of Social Security increases, and up to now we have not been able to get a vote on this. Yet this will be taking effect in January and taking more out of the pockets of our seniors.

We know that one of the major reasons for the increase—it is not just